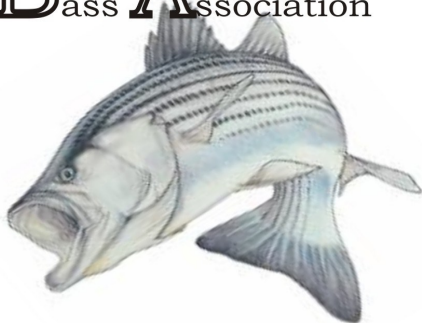


Tennessee Striped Bass Association

Get Hooked !



September/October 2023



This fine young lad shows off his catch while fishing with John Mosca and Capt. Kyle.

In-Person Bi-Monthly Meetings on first Thursdays

- at Shoney's on Emory Road in Powell

TSBA web site <http://tnstripedbass.com/> for the latest news.

Submit news items to tsba.newsletter@gmail.com

Join us on Facebook [Tennessee Striped Bass Association](#)

October 2023 - Club Meeting On Thursday 10/5

The October meeting will be held on Thursday, October 5th at Shoney's, 315 E. Emory Rd, Powell, TN 37849. Dinner at 6; meeting begins at 7.

Come join your fellow club members for a fun and informative session featuring a discussion about fall and winter striped bass fishing techniques and best practices!

Dam Safety

Last week, yet another fisherman was killed at Fort Loudon Dam while water was being discharged from the spillways. According to local news reports, the boat he and a friend were fishing in was pulled toward the dam where it quickly filled with water and capsized. The surviving angler was pulled to safety by another fishing boat. Both men were wearing life jackets.

It's well known that dams are productive fishing spots when they are spilling. However, spilling creates a uniquely hazardous environment that demands extreme caution. Based on my back-of-a-napkin math, when Ft. Loudon Dam spills *each* spillway typically releases 50,000 to over 250,000 pounds of water per second. Needless to say, when this quantity of water falls into a boat from a height of approximately 40 feet, bad stuff happens very quickly.

Full disclosure, I fish dams when they spill at every opportunity. Since I'm still alive, I suppose I can share how I've managed to avoid a ~~dirt~~ water nap. My strategy is simple; I don't put my boat anywhere I wouldn't feel completely comfortable swimming. Do not trust your boat's engine to fight the current. Stay far away from eddies, areas where the water flows sideways or back toward the dam, and large standing waves. This usually means staying at least 75 yards from the dam. Since the water is choppy, I suggest you remain seated unless you have the balance of a gymnast. Of course, wear a life jacket at all times. If you don't, TWRA is likely watching and will be happy to give you a \$300 reminder to wear it.

See you there!
Keith Shannon



Above: Greg Osterbrook with a nice striper!

Right: John Cosca and companion with a couple catches on Norris!



Fall and Early Winter Techniques for Striped Bass

East Tennessee is fortunate to have several lakes with good striped bass fishing. This article summarizes my experiences on Watts Bar in the late fall and early winter. I really enjoy fishing this time of year. After a scorching summer of sweating through my clothes, the cool weather is a welcome relief. The crowds of fishermen and pleasure boaters are gone, watchable wildlife is abundant, and fishing is good.

When

In the summer and early fall, when the water temperature is in the mid-70s or higher, most striped bass are enjoying the cooler water in the Tennessee and Clinch River arms of the lake. As the water temperature cools and fall progresses, fish leave the river arms and return to the main lake to feed heavily. By the end of October, huge schools of shad move to the back of mid and lower lake feeder creeks and large coves. Shortly thereafter, flocks of seagulls show up to eat the shad and, fortunately for us, show us where the striped bass are.

Where

Your best bet to find striped bass is to find seagulls. When striped bass feed, they push shad to the surface, making them easy prey for seagulls. Seek out creeks and coves that consistently have large numbers of gulls. A pair of binoculars helps. Unlike you and I, gulls fish all day every day. They know which creeks are frequented by feeding striped bass and spend most of their time there. They are essentially playing the odds, in gamblers' parlance. Every morning and evening, striped bass and gulls have feeding frenzies on Watts Bar. However, the frenzies don't occur in the same place every day. If you don't see fish breaking and birds diving shortly after sunrise or within an hour or so of sunset, move. You are in the wrong spot. If fish don't break by a certain time known only to the birds, they will leave a particular creek to find breaking fish. You should too.

How

Shad on freelines, planer boards and down lines will all catch fish in late fall and early winter. In the early morning and late afternoon, when fish typically come up near the surface to feed, planer boards and freelines are most effective. When the sun is high, and especially so on sunny days, downlines work best. Watch your graph and note the depth at which you see fish and rig your rods accordingly. I always keep two rods rigged with artificial baits to target breaking fish. One is rigged with a topwater bait like a popper or wakebait, the other with a swimbait or similar soft plastic.

Striped bass can be very size-selective as the water gets colder. When striped bass are feeding on tiny baits, they will often not take larger baits. The solution is to downsize your bait and tackle. When the water is in the high 40s, a three-inch shad on ten-pound line and a #4 hook is often required to get bites. Don't overlook tiny artificials in cold water. They will frequently outfish live bait. In cold water, striped bass' strike zones get very small. Live bait is smart. It stays out of the strike zone. Artificial baits are dumb. Tiny artificials will generate a reaction bite when it gets in the strike zone.

Keith Shannon



Creel and Size limits

CHEROKEE LAKE

Striped Bass or Hybrid Striped Bass:

2 per day in combination, 15 inch minimum length limit

NORRIS LAKE

Striped Bass

April 1–October 31: 2 per day, 15 inch minimum length limit

November 1–March 31: 1 per day, 36 inch minimum length limit

WATTS BAR

Striped Bass or Hybrid Striped Bass:

April 1–October 31: 2 per day in combination

November 1–March 31: 2 per day in combination, only one may be a striped bass.

Striped Bass:

April 1–October 31: 15 inch minimum length limit.

November 1–March 31: 36 inch minimum length limit

Hybrid Striped Bass:

15 inch minimum length limit

MELTON HILL

Striped Bass or Hybrid Striped Bass:

2 per day in combination, including Clinch River upstream to Highway 61 bridge in Clinton. 15 inch minimum length limit

Striped Bass:

32–42 inch PLR; only one fish may be over 42 inches

Outlook for current fishing spots

Cherokee Lake

The seasonal migration away from the thermal trap that the larger fish have been surviving in during the late summer months has begun as the lake turnover & mixing is underway. The water quality remained good enough this summer for great survival of the larger stripers. Good dissolved oxygen & temperatures can be found anywhere so the striper/hybrid will head for the most abundant bait. Catch and Release will be possible (and desirable). Top water activity can be noticed on the calm mornings. The largest concentration of bait happens in the upper end of the reservoir and the back of major coves & creeks. The gulls will start to arrive by the end of October & other bait-eating birds will help find the game fish until then.

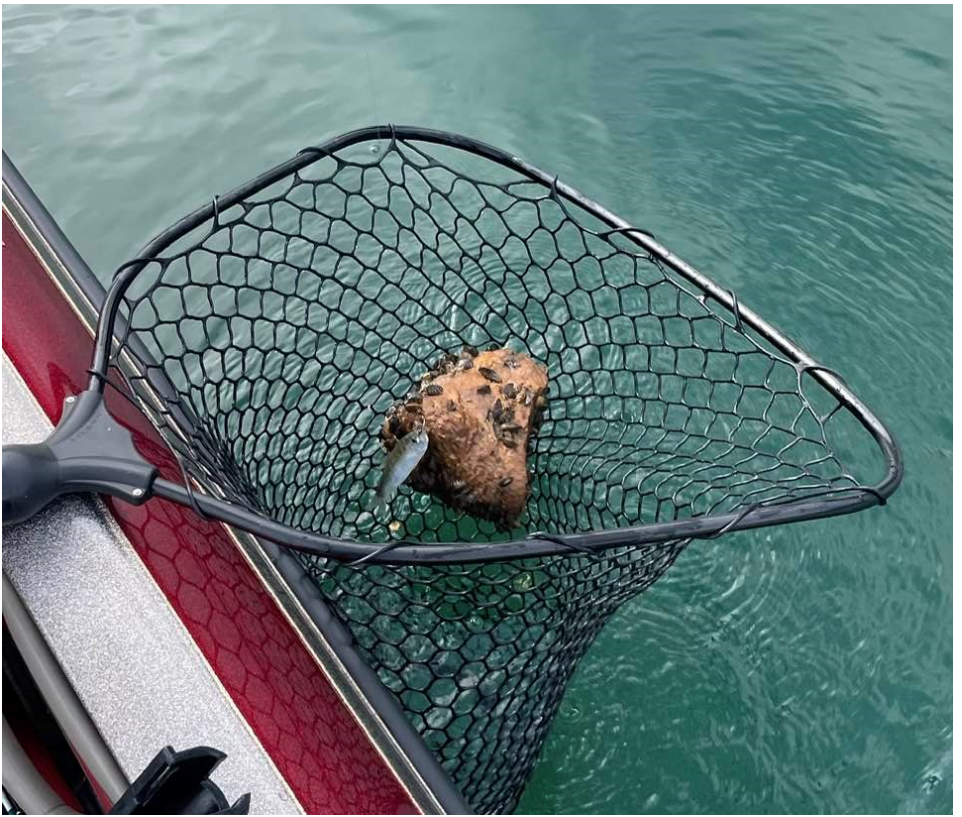
Norris Lake

Water quality remained great all summer, so survival was excellent. Lake turnover & mixing is well underway, so migration of the stripers from deep water around the lower portion (dam end) of the lake has begun. Bait can be seen on the surface along with breaking game fish feeding in it. Stripers can be found around the most abundant bait in the headwaters of major creeks, coves, and rivers. Good Catch and Release practice now becomes optional. The gulls are expected back to help find the fish at the same time the size and creel limits change on November 1.

Watts Bar & Melton Hill

Look for the stripers in front of the major coves or where you find the most bait fish and bait-eating birds. Catch and Release works good in the cool water months. The fish in Watts Bar and lower Clinch Watts Bar have contamination warnings so should not be harvested.

— Ezell Cox



Some days you catch rockfish; some days you catch rock fish! Submitted by Eric Rauch



YOUR 2023 TSBA OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, AND STAFF

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Vice President: Seeking candidate

Treasurer: Eric Rauch

Secretary: Keith Shannon

Board Chairman: Allan Franklin

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No Need to Renew!

If you paid dues in 2020 or later, your membership has been extended through 2023. New members can still join by completing the form in this newsletter and mailing it with their payment to the address below.

Enclose a check for \$20.00

Mail to: TSBA

P.O. Box 7303

Knoxville, TN 37921

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As a member:

- * You'll receive a newsletter periodically.
- * You'll help support striped bass fisheries & wildlife agencies.
- * You'll be informed of new regulations & information that affect striper fishing.
- * You'll develop a network of "striper friends."
- * You'll learn new methods to improve your striped bass fishing effectiveness.
- * You'll be able to call officers for fishing reports.
- * You'll be able to attend bi-monthly meetings with informative programs.
- * You'll have access to all areas of the TSBA, Inc. web page.

Is this a renewal ___ or a new membership ___

Your name _____ -- _____
Spouse's name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone(_____) _____
E-Mail address _____

I have read and agree to abide by and be bound by the Tennessee Striped Bass Association, Inc. (TSBA, Inc.) Bylaws*

* A copy of the Bylaws can be found on the TSBA, Inc. website at <http://tnstripedbass.com/> or at the offices of the corporation.

(Signature)

(Date)

Enclose a check for \$20.00
Mail to: Tennessee Striped Bass Association, Inc
P.O. Box 7303
Knoxville, TN 37921

Memberships extended: Members who paid 2020 or later dues have no need to renew for this year. All current memberships have been extended through 2023. New members may still join by filling out the above form and submitting it with their payment.

Tennessee Striped Bass Association
P.O. Box 7303
Knoxville, TN 37921

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GET HOOKED!